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JOHN MAC DONNELL CLARAGH.

Among the native Irish poets of the last century, perhaps the most justly celebrated was John Mac Donnell. He was born in the year 1691, in O'Keeffe's Country, near Charleville, in the County of Cork, and was known by the name of "*Claragh*," from the residence of his family, which was situated at the foot of a mountain of that name, between Charleville and Mallow. He died in the year 1754, and was interred in the old church-yard of Ballyslough, near Charleville. Mac Donnell was a man of considerable classical learning, and had made some progress in a translation of Homer into Irish, which was considered of great merit; but his celebrity rested chiefly on his minor works, which were strongly imbued with the political feelings of his Catholic countrymen, who were suffering at that period under the rigours of the penal code. Of these a considerable number have been preserved, and two or three of them have been translated and published in Mr. Hardiman's "*Irish Minstrelsy*." We have endeavoured to find among those remains, one untinged with this prevailing characteristic, to lay before our readers in an English dress, but without success. The following poem, however, though a Jacobite relic, has nothing in it now applicable to existing circumstances, or calculated to excite political feeling; and its poetic beauty is such, we think, as will give pleasure to all our readers, and in addition to its interest as illustrating the Fairy topography of Ireland, entitles it to a place in our little repository of the literature, history, and antiquities of our Country.

THE DREAM OF MAC DONNELL CLARAGH.

(A JACOBITE RELIC.)

'Twas night, and buried in deep sleep I lay,
 Strange visions rose before me, and my thoughts
 Played wildly through the chambers of my brain,
 When, lo! who sits beside my couch, and smiles
 With soul-subduing sweetness?—'Tis the Banshee!
 I saw her taper waist—her raven tresses
 Waving in wanton ringlets to her feet,
 Her face, fair as the swan's unsullied plumage.
 I viewed her—Oh! her mien of angel meekness,
 Her soul-enchancing eyes, her delicate lips,
 Her white round breast, her soft and dazzling skin,
 Her sylph-like form, her pale transparent fingers,
 Her ivory teeth, her mild and marble brow,
 Proclaimed her immortality.—The image,
 Though dream-born, fascinates my fancy still.
 Thrilling with deepest awe I spoke, and asked
 From what bright dwelling had the spirit come?
 She answered not, but swift as thought vanished,
 And left me to my dark and troubled solitude.
 Methought I called her, but she heeded not
 My sighs, my cries, mine anguish—and methought
 I left my home to seek her. Northwards first
 My steps I turned, and came to Gruagach's palace,
 Far distant from my dwelling—forth away
 I speeded on to Croghan's fairy-hall;
 Thence to the palace of Senaid, the grand
 And gorgeous fairy mansion of Ardree,
 On whose broad summit mighty hosts assemble;
 I visited that glorious dome that stands
 By the dark rolling waters of the Boyne,
 Where Æugus Oge magnificently dwells.
 In each, in all I entered, sought, enquired,
 But found her not. In each, in all, they said—
 "She moves before thee wheresoe'er thou goest."
 Enough—I reached Mac Lir's colossal pride,
 Departed thence to Creeveroe, and onward
 To Temor, and the wondrous fairy structure
 That stands in power on Knockfirin's airy peak.
 To Aoibhil's palace-walls at length I came,
 Which rise below the rock's gigantic brow;
 And here mine eyes were feasted with the sight
 Of loveliest damsels dancing to the tones
 Of soft voluptuous music; and I saw
 By Aoibhil, Thomond's chieftains, mighty spirits,
 Beautiful, splendid, cased in armed mail,
 Whose sports were battle-feats and tilts and tournaments.

And here, too, seated modestly and mildly,
 Her long dark tresses loosely flowing round her,
 I saw the heavenlike being whose bright eyes
 Had made me thus a wanderer. Glancing round,
 She saw and recognised me. And she spoke:
 "Mortal," she said, "I pity thy lone wanderings;
 "Approach and hear my melancholy tale:
 "The guardian spirit of this land am I.
 "I weep to see my people fallen—to see
 "My priests and warlike heroes banished hence
 "To alien shores, where, languishing and pining,
 "They groan beneath the iron yoke of slavery!
 "And ah! my child*, my son, my lineal heir,
 "He, too, is far away from me—an exile!
 "I mourn for him, for them, for all departed.
 "Pity!—Oh, Heaven! look down upon me!" Here
 The cloud that sleep had cast around my senses
 Departed, and along with it departed
 The towering domes, the palace-halls, and all
 The chiefs, and dames, and glittering decorations;
 But o'er my spell-bound soul there hung a gloom,
 And there even now it hangs, in spite of reason!

* The Pretender.

ON TREES AND PLANTING.

That nature has done much for Ireland and man but little, is a general remark; and as regards the appearance of the country is, we regret to say, but too true. Nothing contributes more to the naked and desolate appearance of the remote districts, than the total absence of timber. There we see immense tracts without even a bush to shelter the shivering cattle from the inclemency of the blast, or encourage vegetation by its friendly shelter. If we penetrate into the mountain glens and vallies, we find their steep and rugged sides unproductive as pasture, but fully capable of producing trees, which would not only yield a future profit, but would convert those now desolate and uninviting spots into scenes of most romantic beauty. We naturally enquire to what causes are we to attribute this neglect? We ask why the farmers of the country do not adopt a species of improvement which costs but little, and which would soon repay that cost in the advantages which the shade and shelter of trees would afford both to cattle and to crops, in tempering the summer's heat and the winter's cold; a species of improvement absolutely necessary in a country where the cultivators of the soil do not, in general, possess sufficient capital for the erection of the necessary farm buildings, and whose live stock are consequently obliged to encounter all the rigours of the climate without any protection. Several causes have been assigned for this neglect—some over which the occupying farmer has no control; others which may be traced to the people themselves. Amongst the former, are, the absence of the proprietors of the soil—high rents, and uncertain tenures. It is urged that the tenants of the land have no encouragement to improve their farms in the way we have mentioned—that they are deprived of that fostering patronage, that stimulus to exertion and industry, which the kindness, example, and assistance of resident landlords would afford—that no ties exist between the absentee and his tenant, which can lead the latter to expect that on the expiration of his lease he will meet with any preference on a new letting. If the cold and bleak aspect of this country be contrasted with the cultivated appearance of England, where the fields are divided, warmed, and sheltered by hedge-rows, and every farm-house is surrounded with trees, the answer is, that the English tenants are continued in their holdings from generation to generation, and though the English farming leases are in general shorter than the Irish, that the English proprietor feels a pride in continuing his tenants in their farms, and points out the long continued connexion between his house and its dependents, with as much complacency as he would the antiquity of his own pedigree: that even though there should be no formal lease in existence, the tenants of the ancient proprietors in England, can in most instances address their landlords in the beautiful words of the old song:—